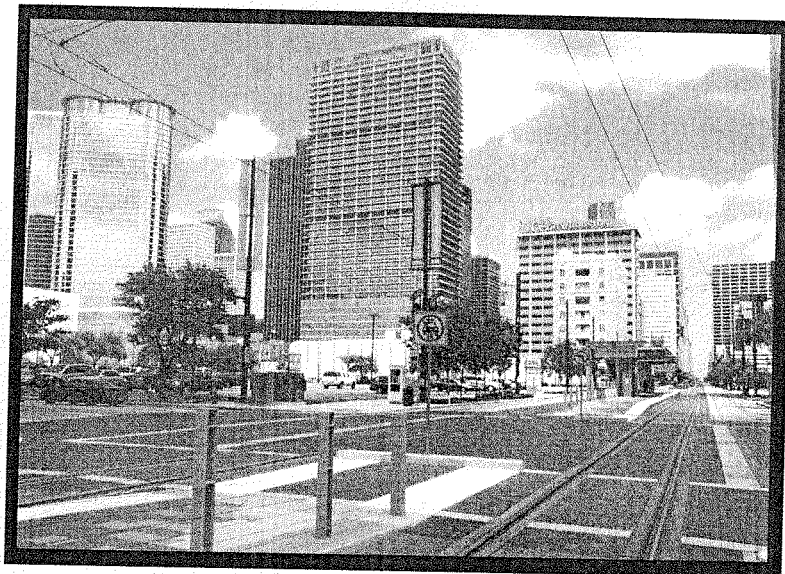




AIA HOUSTON RECOMMENDATIONS PLANNING TASK FORCE REPORT ON HOUSING

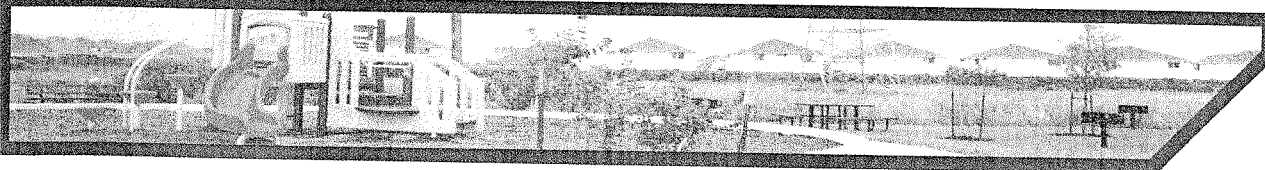


AIA Houston has worked with Houston City Council, local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and a group of national experts on housing, planning, and land use issues to produce *Housing Strategies for Houston: Expanding Opportunities* (June 2004). This report highlighted critical challenges facing Houston over the next 25 years and underscored the necessity of strengthening Houston's housing and planning policies.

Housing Strategies called for a Housing Chief to coordinate Houston's diverse policies and activities. Mayor Bill White appointed John Walsh Deputy Chief of Staff for Housing and Neighborhoods in August 2004. The report also called for the adoption of a Housing Plan to provide an overall framework to guide housing policy and establish funding priorities. A planning task force was formed and released its recommendations for a Houston Housing plan in May 2005.

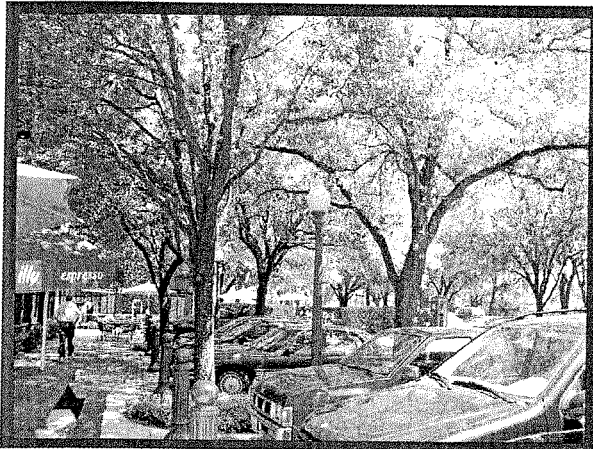
The Houston Planning Commission formed six committees to "consider and propose policies that support a sound quality of life and sustainable growth of Houston, and where appropriate, to recommend methods for turning those policies into actionable programs and ordinances." AIA Houston is honored to have an AIA member serving on each committee in March 2005.

The following recommendations and policy points have come from the Planning Task Force report and are reorganized to align with the Planning Commission committees. These recommendations should be achievable in the next five years. The Board of Directors of AIA Houston unanimously approved a Resolution on August 9, 2005 to adopt the following points as a policy statement and recommendations of AIA Houston concerning the near future of planning as it relates to housing in the City of Houston.



DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

- A. **Encourage High Density Residential Development** in the urban core and near transit hubs and job centers. This will maximize land use and reduce negative impacts from traffic congestion and related air pollution.
- B. **Provide Incentives for Developers** to encourage development in targeted areas.
- C. **Conduct a Public Relations Campaign** to promote the advantages of high-density neighborhoods.
- D. **Amend Chapter 42** to identify neighborhood types and establish a range of design standards to strengthen neighborhood cohesion. Such standards should not relate to land use but to elements such as minimum set-backs, street widths, curb cuts, sidewalks, parking, and pedestrian arcades.
- E. **Institute an Optional Site Plan Review Process** to access incentives and provide an opportunity for the planning department to review plans and advise owners and developers of recognized neighborhood plans. The Site Plan Review should allow for public input at early stages to minimize last-minute hold ups and community opposition. The same planning department representative should handle all reviews for one particular neighborhood.

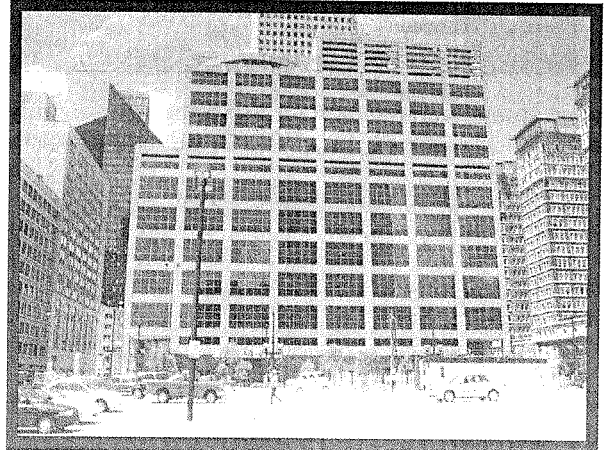


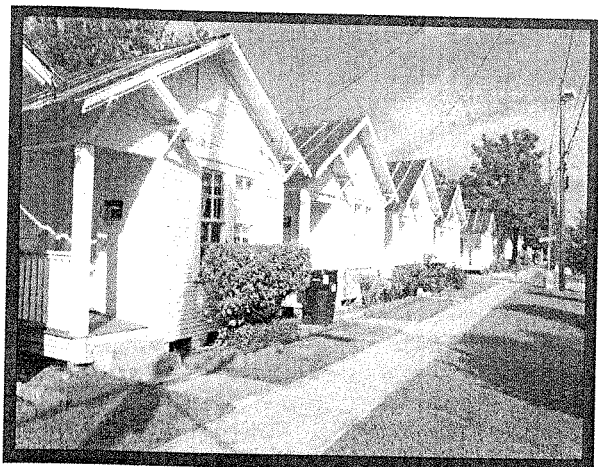
PARKING

- A. **Advocate Intermodal Transportation** where parking lots link to bus or light rail.
- B. **Amend Parking Ordinances** to meet the needs of new development and light rail.
- C. **Review the Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan** to create a Collector Street Plan to provide safer bicycling and walking and to divert short car trips from congested arterial streets. This plan should include design standards to minimize cut-through traffic.
- D. **Establish a Major Sidewalk and Trail Plan** to encourage pedestrian and bicycle traffic, cutting down on automobile use.

URBAN CORE

- A. **Promote Sensible and Sustainable Residential Growth** in the urban core by encouraging density and providing effective public transportation and pedestrian ways.
- B. **Identify areas where Infrastructure Investments** are desirable (older neighborhoods or new development). Maximize infrastructure investments to advance the City's community development objectives and to achieve economies of scale that stimulate development in areas with existing or planned infrastructure.
- C. **Provide Public Parks and Green Space** that are safe and well-maintained. Establish new parks in downtown areas.
- D. **Make Public Art** a component of public space and work with new and established City programs and commissions to enhance public space in Houston.



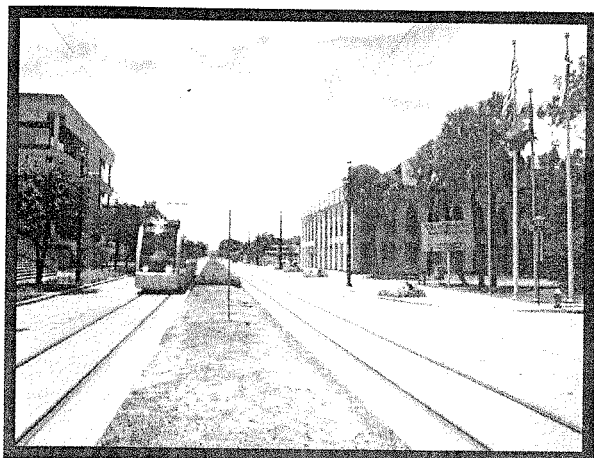
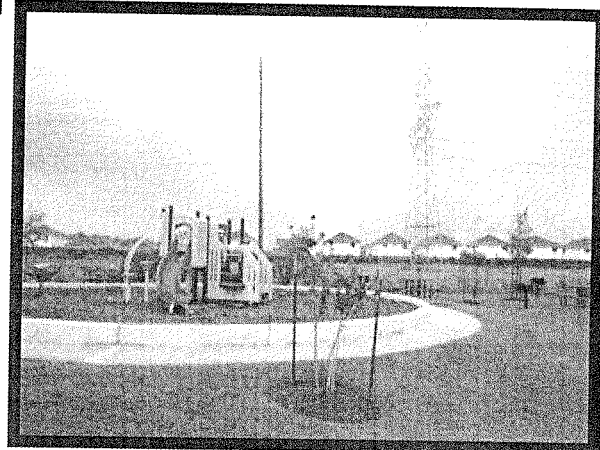


NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

- A. **Revitalize Older Neighborhoods** by improving infrastructure, increasing public open space, and encouraging historic preservation and diversity.
- B. **Create New Neighborhoods** inside and outside of Loop 610 that provide housing for all economic groups in proximity to parks, schools, shops, workplaces, etc.
- C. **Strengthen and Support Civic Associations** and Super Neighborhoods by improving communication and developing opportunities for public input. Fund professional planning assistance from City staff or outside consultants for neighborhoods without a recognized plan.
- D. **Balance Concerns** of existing residents with the need for redevelopment in older neighborhoods, minimizing gentrification.

SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

- A. **Encourage New Sustainable Communities** in suburban locations that include higher-density housing, parks, shops, schools, police services and work places.
- B. **Allow for Intermodal Transportation** with park and ride lots, busses and light-rail.
- C. **Strengthen Neighborhood Associations** in suburban areas to work in concert with the City at large.
- D. **Make Public Art** part of neighborhood parks and public school grounds and access City of Houston arts programs.



LONG RANGE PLANNING

- A. **Expand Housing Options** by improving affordability and encouraging a wider range of rental and owner-occupied housing to families of all income levels.
- B. **Improve the Allocation of Resources**, both fiscal and human, for community development. Ensure that resources for development (e.g., CBDG, HOME, TIRZ, affordable housing) are utilized to meet the needs of our many diverse neighborhoods.
- C. **Increase the Transparency and Inclusiveness** of decision making to strengthen the coordination of resources.
- D. **Establish Flexible Guidelines** for plans to become eligible for benefits, recognizing the diversity of different planning processes and minimizing geographical overlap and conflicts between plans.
- E. **Ensure Funding and Give Priority Status** to recommended actions, such as infrastructure investment, code enforcement, hurricane evacuation planning, and regional disaster relief.
- F. **Enhance Coordination among City Departments:** Planning and Development, Housing and Community Development, Public Works, the Housing Authority, and Housing Finance. Programs such as Houston Hope should benefit from this enhanced coordination.
- G. **Institutionalize the Post of Deputy Chief of Staff for Neighborhoods** and Housing to provide continuity across administrations. Dedicate additional resources, including staff.
- H. **Create a Housing Strategy** based on projected demand utilizing maps as part of a Comprehensive Plan for development in the City of Houston.

HOUSING STRATEGIES FOR HOUSTON

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES PLANNING TASK FORCE FOR HOUSING REPORT

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK FORCE REPORT

go to www.aiahouston.org
(click on the blue box "Housing Houston" then click on "downloads" and each report is listed)

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Suburban Development Committee
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